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Marine Corps League
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
Military Officers
Association of America
Military Order of the
World Wars
National Association for
Uniformed Services
Navy Seabee Veterans of
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Reserve Officers
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Roanoke Valley Veterans
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Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of
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Virginia National Guard
Association
Women Marines
Association*

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July 11, 2012

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

2013 Position Paper Electronic Return of Absentee Ballots by Overseas Voters

1. **Objective:** To allow for electronic return of absentee ballots by overseas voters.
2. **Background:**
 - Uniformed service personnel, their dependents, and overseas civilian voters often experience difficulties in casting absentee ballots due to a number of factors, including the timely return of a voted ballot.
 - Currently an overseas voter can electronically register and receive an absentee ballot, but the ballot must be returned via “snail” mail.
 - HB1057 and SB82, as introduced in the 2012 General Assembly, intended to improve registration and absentee voting procedures for military and overseas voters to include authorization for pilot programs to vote by secure electronic means. Both bills were continued to 2013.
 - HB1057 grants the Secretary of the State Board of Elections (SBE) “...the authority to authorize and supervise a pilot program or demonstration project in partnership with the Department of Defense Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) or other state agency for the purpose of allowing voters specified in subdivision 2 of §24.2-700 and military voters with disabilities or injuries to vote by secure electronic means or new technologies for such voters. Ballots cast pursuant to the provisions of this section shall be valid for all purposes.”
 - The Impact Statement for HB1057 states that the “SBE indicates that a \$1.81 million dollar federal grant from the Department of Defense’s Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) is funding the development and immediate ongoing costs associated with this legislation. This technology is already in development for improvement in processes that are allowed under existing law.”
3. **Discussion:** Legislation is required to permit electronic return of the voted ballot.
4. **Recommendation:** That the Governor and General Assembly enact legislation to permit the electronic return of absentee ballot by overseas voters.